

REGIONAL ORAL HEALTH CONSULTANT POSITIONS

Position Identity and Classification

There are seven contracted regional oral health consultants available through a HRSA grant. The regional oral health consultants are subcontracted to serve each DPH region.

Qualifications

Registered Dental Hygienist with Certification in Community Dental Health or Bachelor of Science Degree and Public Health Experience or Master of Science in Public Health or related field.

Role of the Positions

The State Dental Hygiene Officer provides oversight for the positions. Regional Oral Health Consultants will provide education, technical assistance and facilitation of oral health programs and services in five DHFS regions. They will be liaisons between the local health departments, the regional and state offices, including but not limited to CSHCN Centers and Foster Family programs. The role includes applying the core functions of public health, assessments, policy development and assurance as it relates to oral health in the region.

Specific Duties of the Positions Will Include:

- Provision of oral health awareness and education
- Conduct data collection activities and screening services as requested
- Educate communities on the benefits of community water fluoridation
- Assist counties with dietary fluoride supplement programs
- Assist counties with fluoride mouth rinse programs
- Assist counties with fluoride varnish programs
- Assist the State Dental Hygiene Officer and Chief Dental officer with the review and drafting of educational materials and program manuals.
- Plan, operate and implement maternal and early childhood caries prevention training programs (*Integrating Preventive Oral Health Measures into HealthCare Practice*)
- Plan, operate and implement oral health education programs in cooperation with Children with Special Health Care Needs and with Foster Family Programs (*SmileAbilities*)
- Assist local health departments and community agencies with dental sealant program development
- Assist local health departments in developing sealant programs through medical assistance reimbursement for sealants as a covered service under HealthCheck
- Facilitate municipal, county and multi-county health department establishment of oral health services
- Provide technical assistance to support school based oral health services.
- Integrate oral health services into public health system
- Train primary health care providers to integrate preventive oral health measures into primary health care practice

Regional Oral Health Consultants

Objective: To increase oral health infrastructure capacity in an effort to prevent oral diseases in infants, toddlers, preschool and school aged children, a Division of Public Health agency contracted with regional oral health consultants to provide community technical assistance and training services.

Methods: Through personal service and agency contracts, six regional oral health consultants (state licensed dental hygienists with a background in public health) were contracted to serve five DHFS Regions. In 2002-2003 federal MCH Block Grant and a CDC Oral Disease Prevention in School-Aged Children Grant funded the consultant positions. In 2003-2004 a HRSA State Collaborative Systems grant is funding consultants. Services include technical assistance for county level pre-school or school-aged surveys, school-based fluoride mouthrinse, dietary fluoride supplement, and school-based or community-based dental sealant program development, maternal and early childhood caries prevention programs, and SmileAbilities, a program for families with children with special health care needs.

Conclusion: This program successfully demonstrates a method to increase oral public health infrastructure capacity, providing communities with oral health training and technical assistance. In 2002-2003, twelve agencies and 150 medical and dental providers received education in conducting infant and toddler basic screening, family oral health education, and fluoride varnish applications. A pilot, SmileAbilities program was developed, serving families and caregivers with children with special health care needs and two county school-aged oral health surveys were facilitated.

Funding Source: Health Resources Services Administration

Consultant Contracts: \$9,133.00/Region/Year (approximately 5-6 hours/week)

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